

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

66614

DRAFTED BY: EUR/EE:NGANDREWS

APPROVED BY: EUR/EE:NGANDREWS

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R 242228Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

UNCLAS STATE 040280

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 040280 ACTION MOSCOW DTD 21 FEB

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UNCLAS STATE 040280

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:PFOR, UR

SUBJECT:MEETING OF U.S.-SOVIET TRADE COUNCIL AND THE TRADE

-- ACT

FOLLOWING IS FROM DEPARTMENT'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING
FEBRUARY 21:

QUOTE: Q: AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THIS MORNING, MEMBERS OF
THE U.S.-SOVIET TRADE COUNCIL SAID THE SECRETARY SPOKE TO
THEM FOR 45 MINUTES YESTERDAY ON THE PROBLEM OF THE
U.S.-SOVIET TRADE LEGISLATION BREAKDOWN. I WOULD LIKE TO
ASK FOR A COPY OF THE TRANSCRIP OF THAT MEETING, AND IF
NECESSARY, TO ASK FOR IT UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT.

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A: LET ME MAKE TWO COMMENTS ON THIS. NO. 1, WITH REGARD TO THE SECRETARY MEETING WITH THE GROUP FOR 45 MINUTES, I HAVE CHECKED INTO THIS THIS MORNING AND HE WAS THERE WITH THE GROUP FOR APPROXIMATELY 15 OR 20 MINUTES. HE ARRIVED ABOUT 4:40 TO 4:45 AND LEFT AT 5 O'CLOCK.

ON YOUR OTHER POINT, I'VE ALSO CHECKED INTO THIS THERE IS NO TRANSCRIPT THAT HAS BEEN MADE OF HIS PRIVATE REMARKS THAT HE MADE TO THE GROUP. NO TRANSCRIPT WAS MADE.

Q: CAN YOU SUMMARIZE HIS REMARKS OR PARAPHRASE THEM?

A: HE MADE THESE REMARKS IN PRIVATE TO THE GROUP; BUT I CAN GIVE YOU A COUPLE OF GENERAL POINTS WITH REGARD TO WHAT HE SAID. THE SECRETARY GAVE THE GROUP A GENERAL APPRAISAL OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

Q: WHAT DID HE THINK OF THEM?

A: LET ME JUST FINISH HERE.

ON THE SUBJECT OF TRADE, THE SECRETARY TOLD THE GROUP THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE U.S.-SOVIET TRADE NORMALIZED AND THAT HE WILL BE CONSULTING WITH THE CONGRESS ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED TOWARD THAT END.

I THINK WITH REGARD TO YOUR QUESTION YOU JUST ASKED ON THE APPRAISAL OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONS, THE SECRETARY ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO THAT MOST RECENTLY -- AS FAR AS I RECALL -- IN GENEVA, FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO.

Q: DID HE TELL THEM THE SAME THING? I MEAN, DID HE TELL THEM NO MORE, OR LESS THAN HE TOLD GROMYKO, OR WHAT?

A: I CANNOT TELL YOU. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q: ON THE TRADE LEGISLATION --
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A: YES, SIR

Q: -- IS IT THE SECRETARY'S POSITION THAT THE LEGISLATION SHOULD BE CHANGED, OR THAT THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD COMPLY WITH THE TERMS OF THE LEGISLATION?

A: WE'VE HAD THIS QUESTION RAISED BEFORE -- AS WE ALL

KNOW HERE -- AND AT THIS PARTICULAR STAGE, I HAVE TO LEAVE IT THAT THE SECRETARY IS GOING TO BE TALKING WITH THE APPROPRIATE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED, IN VIEW OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT HAVE ARISEN.

THIS IS NOT SOMETHING THAT THE SECRETARY IS GOING TO TELL THE CONGRESS: "YOU OUGHT TO DO IT THIS WAY OR THAT WAY." THERE HAS TO BE A DIALOGUE HERE BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH ON HOW BEST TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES. SO I CAN'T SPECULATE HOW THIS IS GOING TO BE WORKED OUT. BUT, AS WE SAID BEFORE, WE DO FEEL

THAT THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE SOLVED; AND IT'S GOT TO BE DONE IN CONSULTATION, AS THE SECRETARY SAID BEFORE, WITH THE CONGRESS.

Q: THE SECRETARY IS CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS, AND THE SOVIET OFFICIALS ARE CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS, AND DONALD KENDALL IS CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS. IS THERE ANY COORDINATION AMONG THESE VARIOUS PARTIES CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS?

A: I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THERE IS DETAILED CONSULTATION WITH THE THREE GROUPS YOU MENTIONED, FRANKLY. I MEAN, THE SECRETARY, AS I SAID EARLIER, TALKED WITH THIS GROUP YESTERDAY ABOUT THIS PROBLEM. THE SECRETARY HAS BEEN TALKING WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BEFORE WE WENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST. HE'S GOING TO CONTINUE TO TALK WITH THEM TO TRY AND EXPLORE HOW THE PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED. BUT AS TO WHETHER THERE'S SPECIFIC COORDINATION, I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q: YOU DON'T KNOW, THEN, WHETHER THE RUSSIANS AND THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SECRETARY ARE ASKING CONGRESS FOR THE SAME THING, OR IN THE SAME GENERAL AREAS OR ALONG THE SAME LINES?

A: NO, I DO NOT KNOW.

Q: CAN I GO BACK TO THE SOVIET-AMERICAN TRADE MATTER -- IN SEVERAL ASPECTS? AT THE NEWS CONFERENCE THIS MORNING -- MR. ALKHIMOV, THE RUSSIAN CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL, SAID THAT THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK LEGISLATION, WHICH INVOLVES A 300-MILLION-DOLLAR CEILING OVER FOUR YEARS, WAS UNACCEPTABLE BECAUSE OF VARIOUS REASONS. WHEN THE QUESTION WAS PUT THAT WHAT THE LEGISLATION ACTUALLY SAID WAS THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION HAD WANTED TO LEND MORE, PROVIDE MORE CREDITS TO THE SOVIET UNION, ABOVE 300 MILLION IT HAS TO GO TO CONGRESS TO GET APPROVAL

-- HE SAID THAT THIS INVOLVES BUREAUCRATIC MEASURES
WHICH WERE NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE SOVIET UNION.

NOW, I WONDER -- MY QUESTION IN THIS CONNECTION IS:
DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER THE SOVIET POSITION
REGARDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES IN THE UNITED
STATES A MATTER OF INTERFERENCE WITH THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS
OF THE UNITED STATES?

A: I THINK, FRANKLY, ON THIS QUESTION OF THE EX-IM

CREDITS -- WE'VE TALKED ABOUT IT HERE ON A NUMBER OF
OCCASIONS -- THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW ON THIS IS VERY
WELL KNOWN. THIS IS ONE OF THE SUBJECTS THAT WE ARE
CONSULTING WITH THE CONGRESS ON TO SEE HOW THIS
PROBLEM ALSO CAN BE DEALT WITH. I JUST WOULD RATHER
LEAVE THE EX-IM CREDIT QUESTION THERE FOR THE
TIME BEING. UNQUOTE KI SINGR UNQTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE LAW, TEXT, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE040280
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/EE:NGANDREWS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750065-0681
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750218/aaaaaqac.tel
Line Count: 187
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 MAY 2003 by RuthemTJ>; APPROVED <23 JAN 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EETING OF U.S.-SOVIET TRADE COUNCIL AND THE TRADE -- ACT
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US
To: BELGRADE MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006